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Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 17 October 2011, at 10 a.m.

Chair: Mr. Tommo Monthe ..... (Cameroon)
later: Mr. Ballantyne (Vice-Chair) ..... (New Zealand)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Kelapile

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 139: Human resources management (A/66/98, A/66/135, A/66/319 and Corr.1, A/66/347, A/66/355 and Add.1 and A/66/511 and Corr.1)

1. **Ms. de Miranda** (Chief, Human Resources Policy Service) introduced the reports of the Secretary-General on personal conflict of interest (A/66/98), disciplinary matters and possible criminal behaviour (A/66/135) and the composition of the Secretariat (A/66/347).

2. The report on personal conflict of interest (A/66/98), submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 65/247, provided comprehensive information on the main types of conflict of interest faced by the Organization's staff and described the regulatory framework put in place to address, inter alia, general and financial conflicts of interests; conflicts resulting from the receipt of gifts, honours, awards, favours and remuneration; conflicts arising from outside occupation or employment and outside activities; and conflicts stemming from personal relationships. The report also set out the possible legal implications of conflicts of interest, including initiation of disciplinary proceedings where a conflict of interest was not disclosed through appropriate channels, and post-employment restrictions for staff serving in particularly sensitive functions, such as procurement. Lastly, it described the Administration's approach to the management and mitigation of conflicts of interest, which included a robust regulatory framework, identification or review of actual or potential conflicts of interest, and exploration of the most suitable means of mitigation. Where a staff member did not accept the recommended or instructed means of mitigation, further administrative or disciplinary measures could be invoked, as a last resort.

3. Bearing in mind that the Organization frequently received requests for advice or other information concerning real or potential conflicts of interest, the Secretary-General continuously reviewed whether the established mechanisms served the Organization's current and evolving needs, and remained committed to ensuring that United Nations staff members acted impartially and in accordance with their status as international civil servants at all times. In that connection, the Committee might recall that the General Assembly, in paragraph 75 of its resolution 65/247, had decided to defer until its sixty-sixth session consideration of the Secretary-General's proposal to amend regulation 1.2 (m) of the Staff Regulations, governing conflicts of interest, contained in his report on amendments to the Staff Regulations (A/65/213).

4. The report on the practice of the Secretary-General in disciplinary matters and possible criminal behaviour during the period from 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011 (A/66/135) provided an overview of the legislative framework and the current procedures for handling disciplinary matters; summaries of the nature of the established misconduct and/or criminal behaviour, the disciplinary measure imposed in each case, and an indication of whether the measure had been challenged by the staff member before the United Nations Dispute Tribunal; and information on action taken by the Secretary-General in cases involving credible allegations of criminal conduct by United Nations officials or experts on mission.

5. Lastly, the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat: staff demographics (A/66/347) presented a demographic analysis of the composition of the Secretariat from 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011. During the reporting period, the Office of Human Resources Management had launched the first release of an online reporting tool called HR Insight, which allowed permanent missions to download reports on staff demographic information, including desirable ranges. The tool was based on the human resources data warehouse and retrieved information from other human resources systems, including the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) and Nucleus.

6. **Ms. Dubinsky** (Director, Ethics Office), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the Ethics Office (A/66/319 and Corr.1), said that, during the reporting period, the Ethics Office had recorded a 78 per cent increase in requests for its services, including advice regarding potential conflicts of interest, protection against retaliation, procurement-related advice, policy review and outreach and training. The increased level of consultation, which served to reduce the risk of inappropriate behaviour that could damage the Organization's reputation, was attributable to a renewed focus on staff outreach, including numerous field mission visits and presentations to various United Nations offices.

7. During the reporting period, the Ethics Office had made progress in its implementation of the Organization's policy of protection against retaliation. Interim protection had been provided for two staff members pending the completion of independent retaliation investigations. Subsequent to those investigations, the Ethics Office had determined that retaliation had occurred in one of the cases and had issued recommendations pertaining to corrective and disciplinary measures. An alternative investigation panel had also been established for the first time to investigate two prima facie retaliation determinations where, owing to an inherent conflict of interest, the Office of Internal Oversight Services could not have conducted the investigations. Such developments demonstrated that the Organization's policy of protection against retaliation remained robust, effective and adequately resourced.

8. The report contained a proposal for structural improvements to the Secretariat financial disclosure programme, which was administered by the Ethics Office. It should be recalled that, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 62/236, an in-depth analysis had been carried out regarding the relative advantages or disadvantages, including costs, of conducting the review services required under the programme in-house, as compared to outsourcing arrangements. In the context of that analysis, the Secretary-General had convened an internal high-level advisory group to provide guidance on alternative future arrangements for the programme. Based on the advisory group's assessment, the Secretary-General had recommended that the existing external review arrangement should be maintained, since it was considered effective in managing conflicts of interest while protecting the confidentiality of disclosed information. He had also recommended the creation of a new platform for the programme, which would allow modern technologies to be leveraged in order to ensure long-term system viability and robust data security protection. The new platform would require total funding of $597,400, of which one third, or $199,100, would be met from funds received in reimbursement for services provided to various funds and programmes. In order to implement the recommendation, the General Assembly was accordingly requested to appropriate the remaining amount of $398,300 under the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013 as additional requirements over and above the resources already requested.

9. **Mr. Kelapile** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/66/511 and Corr.1), said that, with regard to the composition of the Secretariat, the Advisory Committee reiterated its recommendation that the Secretary-General should supplement the data presented with an analysis of demographic trends and the underlying reasons for them. The Advisory Committee also reiterated that greater efforts should be made to improve the representation of women, in particular at the senior levels. Noting the significant shift in the data for staff subject to desirable ranges in 2011 compared to 2010, the Advisory Committee requested the Secretary-General, in his next report on human resources management, to be considered at the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly, to provide further details on the magnitude of the impact of the implementation of General Assembly resolution 65/247 on the representation status of Member States, as well as comprehensive information on measures taken to address the high number of posts subject to geographical distribution encumbered by staff having no geographical status.

10. The Advisory Committee welcomed the introduction of the online reporting tool, HR Insight, which should improve access by permanent missions to information on staff representation in the Secretariat. However, the Secretary-General should ensure that the integrity of the sensitive data contained in the tool was protected.

11. With regard to the report on the practice of the Secretary-General in disciplinary matters and possible criminal behaviour (A/66/135), the Advisory Committee noted that divergent disciplinary measures had been imposed in respect of apparently similar instances of misconduct. While it had been informed that such factors as the existence of a history of previous misconduct, or the level of delegated authority and managerial responsibility exercised, might affect the severity of disciplinary measures imposed, the Advisory Committee expected such measures to be applied consistently and proportionately.

12. Concerning personal conflict of interest, the Advisory Committee reiterated its previous recommendation in support of the proposed amendment to regulation 1.2 (m) of the Staff Regulations. It also underlined the importance for all

staff members to act in a manner compatible with their status as international civil servants and the importance of financial disclosure in mitigating conflicts of interest. With regard to the activities of the Ethics Office, the Advisory Committee was of the view that quantitative measures of the work accomplished were not sufficient to demonstrate fully whether the objectives of promoting high standards of integrity and a culture of ethics were being achieved. Appropriate evaluation criteria should be developed for that purpose.

13. As for the financial disclosure programme, the Advisory Committee considered that the cost per file submitted for external review was high and encouraged the Secretary-General to explore all available means of reducing that cost. It concurred with the Secretary-General regarding the need to review the filing eligibility criteria in order to control future increases in the cost of the programme. It also supported the Secretary-General's proposal to maintain the outsourcing arrangements for the review function and to develop a new information technology platform, although it recommended that the additional funding requested for that platform should be absorbed.

14. **Mr. Zahran** (Chair, Joint Inspection Unit), introducing the report of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) on inter-agency staff mobility and work/life balance in the organizations of the United Nations system (A/66/355), said that the report aimed to assess the policies and mechanisms regulating staff mobility and work/life balance from a system-wide perspective, providing participating organizations and their respective governing organs with an independent, external assessment of relevant issues. The report contained ten recommendations, one addressed to the legislative bodies of the organizations of the United Nations common system, two to the executive heads of those organizations, and seven to the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB).

15. While it was generally accepted that a structured mobility scheme might enhance the capabilities of staff, by providing them with broader experience, mobility should not be an end in itself. Staff mobility was key to achieving organizational goals, including the goal of "delivering as one". However, since the United Nations system was formed of very diverse organizations, JIU had concluded that there was no "one mobility scheme fits all organizations". It was pleased that the Secretary-General and CEB concurred with its conclusion.

16. Only a proper matching of organizational and staff needs could guarantee a solid base for the successful development and implementation of staff mobility and work/life balance initiatives. Inter-agency mobility, which was currently insignificant in terms of the number of staff who had moved between organizations, should be promoted, focusing on commonalities and values shared by all United Nations system organizations. The financial implications of mobility should also be taken fully into account when launching new initiatives. In addition to easily recognizable direct costs associated with staff mobility, such as travel or household removal, there were other, hidden, costs, such as time needed to learn new duties and settle in a new location, or time required to comply with administrative procedures related to relocation, that were difficult to quantify but certainly not negligible.

17. Inter-agency staff mobility currently happened spontaneously and was driven by individual staff members; new inter-agency mobility initiatives should therefore be built. In that connection, the report included proposals and ideas gathered during interviews undertaken by the Inspectors in their field missions, which could serve as input for the relevant discussions undertaken by organizations in the context of CEB.

18. Although the Inter-Agency Mobility Accord, which had been intended to replace the former Inter-organization Agreement concerning transfer, secondment or loan of staff among the organizations applying the United Nations common system of salaries and allowances, had been issued by CEB in 2005, some organizations had not yet accepted it and continued to use the former Agreement. That issue should be urgently resolved, since the lack of consensus among system organizations did not facilitate system-wide mobility.

19. The JIU Inspectors supported the organizations' efforts towards further harmonization of business practices, which was essential to facilitate inter-agency mobility. They also encouraged advancement towards a common set of staff regulations and rules for the whole United Nations common system, with enhanced mobility as an important component.

20. Medical services should participate more actively in the development and implementation of relevant human resources management policies regarding staff mobility. They also had a major role to play in supporting work/life balance programmes. In that connection, the JIU Inspectors shared the growing concern expressed by the United Nations Medical Directors Working Group regarding the current capacity of the United Nations system to protect, manage and monitor the health of its staff, which was of particular relevance to staff deployed at hardship duty stations, and in the context of the Organization's strategic movement towards mobility and an increased field presence.

21. With regard to recommendation 9 in the JIU report, the difficulty for accompanying expatriate spouses to continue their professional careers was one of the most important hurdles that United Nations organizations needed to overcome in order to recruit and retain highly qualified staff, as well as to promote staff mobility. The agencies agreed with JIU that dual-career support was a key consideration in that regard, of which facilitating local work permits was only one component; they called, in addition, for encouragement, support and central monitoring in order to strengthen local networking among international organizations and spouses. Previous JIU reports had highlighted the need to find a solution to that crucial concern. JIU called on organizations to continue their coordinated efforts, as well as to introduce the matter in the negotiation of any new host country agreement and in future renegotiations of current ones.

22. **Mr. Samatar** (United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination), introducing the note by the Secretary-General (A/66/355/Add.1) transmitting his comments and those of CEB on the JIU report on inter-agency staff mobility and work/life balance in the organizations of the United Nations system, said that the JIU report was a good example of the cooperation that existed between that Unit and CEB, which was committed to ensuring good information flows between each of its member organizations and JIU. CEB members welcomed the comprehensive JIU report, which also underscored many of the issues under review within the human resources inter-agency bodies, including the International Civil Service Commission and the Human Resources Network of CEB. Agencies had welcomed the recognition in the JIU report that a "one-size-fits-all" approach to mobility would not suit an entity as diverse as the United Nations system.

23. While agencies had agreed that dual-career support was an important element in their ability to attract qualified staff members, they had suggested that the report could have gone further by recommending the strengthening of local networking among international organizations. They had also made a number of comments regarding the medical services of United Nations organizations.

24. CEB members had generally welcomed the report and largely accepted most of its recommendations. However, they had expressed reservations regarding the feasibility of implementing some recommendations, particularly recommendations 3 and 5.

25. **Mr. Di Luca** (Argentina), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the effective delivery of United Nations mandates hinged on the quality of its staff and the availability of resources. The Group supported all reform measures aimed at establishing a highly motivated, vibrant and dynamic workforce for the Organization.

26. The Group stressed the need for a comprehensive review of the system of desirable ranges, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 63/250. Two thousand and forty-nine posts, representing less than 5 per cent of the 43,747 Secretariat staff, were currently under that system. The Group reiterated its request to the Secretary-General to intensify his efforts to achieve equitable geographical distribution and gender balance, particularly at the senior management level. Vacancies occurring as a result of retirements should be used to improve the international character of the Organization.

27. The Group appreciated the inclusion of new data on the distribution of staff members at the D-1 level and above in the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat (A/66/347). That information could become a critical factor for improving the currently inadequate representation of developing and emerging countries at the senior management level. The launch of the HR Insight tool was also a welcome development.

28. The Group noted with interest the recommendations and proposals contained in the JIU report on inter-agency staff mobility and work/life balance across the United Nations system and looked

forward to an in-depth discussion of the recommendations, including those related to inter-agency mobility mechanisms and the matching of organizational needs with staff needs.

29. The increase in the volume of service requests received by the United Nations Ethics Office during the most recent reporting period and the number of cases reviewed were not sufficient indicators to determine fully whether the objectives of promoting high standards of integrity and a culture of ethics were being achieved. The Secretary-General should therefore devise appropriate evaluation criteria for that purpose. The Group welcomed the efforts made by the Ethics Office to promote a culture of ethics across the Secretariat, particularly at the senior management level, and stressed the importance for all staff members to act in a manner compatible with their status as international civil servants.

30. The Group noted the Secretary-General's recommendations to maintain the existing arrangements for the review function of the financial disclosure programme and to develop a new information technology platform. It expected that, through the efforts undertaken to create awareness of the financial disclosure programme among the staff and the procedures established to support compliance, those developments would translate into full compliance with the filing obligations.

31. **Mr. Coffi** (Côte d'Ivoire), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the Group supported all human resources reform measures aimed at establishing a dynamic workforce for the Organization: equitable geographic representation and gender balance were critical in that regard. Accordingly, he called on the Secretary-General to ensure that women, especially from developing countries and countries with economies in transition, were appropriately represented within the Secretariat. The Group also requested the Secretary-General to make every effort to achieve equitable geographical distribution within the United Nations. It was regrettable that less than 5 per cent of the total Secretariat staff were currently subject to the system of desirable ranges.

32. The Group welcomed the recent release of the HR Insight online reporting tool. It was to be hoped that the information provided through that website would be updated on a monthly basis.

33. **Mr. Cabactulan** (Philippines), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that ASEAN welcomed the Ethics Office's commitment to administering the financial disclosure programme and promoting a culture of ethics among senior management, a practice the Advisory Committee had recommended should be made mandatory.

34. Recalling that 123 cases of misconduct were listed in the report on the practice of the Secretary-General in disciplinary matters and possible criminal behaviour for the period from 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011 (A/66/135), he urged the Secretary-General to take expeditious disciplinary action in response to proven criminal behaviour while also ensuring that all such measures were imposed in a consistent manner and in proportion to the seriousness of the misconduct, as recommended by the Advisory Committee.

35. While containing useful data, the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat (A/66/347) lacked substantive analysis of the information. He urged the Secretariat to provide explanations of the data for the benefit of Member States. The online reporting tool provided by HR Insight would be very useful.

36. Member States should continue to be active participants in the human resources management reform process, as their contributions had helped to improve conditions at the United Nations and would help to make the Organization a more efficient, democratic, effective and representative body. Streamlining and harmonizing the varying contracts and conditions of service offered to staff members, particularly in field missions, should be a particular priority. That would go a long way towards raising staff morale and ensuring the retention of more experienced staff members.

37. Further efforts were needed to recruit nationals of unrepresented and underrepresented developing countries, and to recruit women, especially to senior posts. Staffing should be based strictly on equitable geographical distribution and gender balance, without sacrificing competence.

38. The delivery of the complex mandates now expected of the Organization in all fields hinged on the quality of the staff, its greatest asset. Human resources reform was a matter of urgency, in the interest of a competent and dynamic workforce.

39. **Mr. Ong** (Singapore) said that the United Nations, a unique platform for global engagement, provided critical services that were essential to international peace, security, stability and prosperity. Human resources management must be efficient and responsive in developing a flexible Organization that promoted the goals set by Member States.

40. In that regard, his delegation welcomed the HR Insight tool, which would support accountability and transparency in human resources management and provide permanent missions with information on staff distribution. The Ethics Office was central to human resources reform, given its role in administering financial disclosure; its outreach activities and development of a briefing package on ethics for senior management were particularly welcome. His delegation supported the Advisory Committee's recommendation to extend the ethics briefing to incoming senior managers at the D-1 and D-2 levels.

41. The fact that 40 per cent of posts subject to the system of geographical ranges were not filled by staff having geographical status was evidence that the diversity of Member States was not reflected in the Secretariat. Efforts to hire well-qualified individuals from across the globe should be increased, including through established procedures, such as the young professionals programme. The promotion of diversity and gender balance within the United Nations could also serve as a positive model for national civil services.

42. **Mr. Diallo** (Senegal) said that his delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's initiatives to improve human resources management, in particular, the establishment of the young professionals programme, the expansion of the financial disclosure programme to include senior-level staff and management and the new talent management system, Inspira, which aimed to ensure equal opportunities among candidates at all levels system-wide and to make the recruitment process more efficient. However, there was still a need for initiatives in support of an effective professional training and leadership programme. His delegation was confident that in his report on human resources management, to be considered by the Assembly at its sixty-seventh session, the Secretary-General would provide proposals addressing those concerns.

43. With regard to gender parity, his delegation encouraged the Secretary-General to be proactive in implementing his policy of supporting the advancement of women, particularly women from developing countries, to the highest leadership positions within the Secretariat. His delegation was disappointed to note the near absence of African women from the list of Under-Secretaries-General and Assistant Secretaries-General provided in the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat (A/66/347) and called for greater balance in that regard.

44. In terms of equitable geographical distribution, the increase in the number of unrepresented and underrepresented countries was a matter of concern, as was the fact that the level of representation of many States, including Senegal, would decrease significantly with the upcoming retirement of more than 40 per cent of their nationals with geographical status from high-level posts. Information on the measures planned by the Secretary-General to ensure that citizens from developing countries were represented among senior-level staff would be welcome. His delegation also requested the Secretary-General to formulate a global strategy to prepare for the replacement of the large number of Secretariat staff retiring from the language services and thus ensure the linguistic diversity of the Organization, as recruitment in that area could be difficult.

45. **Mr. Kanamori** (Japan) said that his delegation shared the Advisory Committee's concern that 40 per cent of posts subject to the system of geographical ranges were not encumbered by staff having geographical status. The fact that 403 of those posts were temporarily filled by non-geographical staff was particularly problematic. Temporary vacancy announcements were not an appropriate means of recruiting and placing staff. That process should be governed by the procedures established in the administrative instruction on the staff selection system (ST/AI/2010/3). His delegation strongly hoped that the General Assembly would endorse the Advisory Committee's recommendation that the Secretary-General should provide comprehensive information on measures taken to address the high number of geographical posts occupied by staff having no geographical status, for consideration at the sixty-seventh session.

46. The report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat (A/66/347) revealed disappointing implementation of paragraph 36 of General Assembly resolution 65/247, with only five

candidates from the national competitive recruitment examination roster placed in P-3 posts between 1 July 2010 and 30 June 2011. His delegation urged the Secretary-General to exercise strong leadership in promoting cooperation between the Office of Human Resources Management and the executive offices of all departments to expedite the placement of remaining candidates in P-2 and P-3 positions. Lastly, he commended the efforts of the Office to attract potential applicants from unrepresented or underrepresented Member States.

47. *Mr. Ballantyne (Vice-Chair), took the Chair.*

48. **Mr. Benmoussa** (Morocco) said that his delegation placed great importance on the rational management of the Organization's human resources, to optimize delivery of mandates by a motivated staff, and on equitable geographical distribution, and, in that regard, called on the Secretary-General to take the necessary measures to ensure that the composition of the staff reflected the international nature of the United Nations. The advancement of women within the Organization was also a priority, given that women still made up only 33 per cent of the total staff and 40 per cent of Professional staff. Lastly, he stressed the urgent need for the appointment of senior managers from developing countries, as many of the Organization's priority issues concerned those countries. The increase in the number of unrepresented and underrepresented countries during the reporting period further underscored that need for a more balanced United Nations staff.

49. **Mr. Prokhorov** (Russian Federation) said that Member States should assess the Secretary-General's proposals on human rights management in the light of General Assembly resolutions 63/250, 65/247 and 65/248 on management reform. In turn, the Secretary-General should provide an analysis of the impact of those resolutions on the selection and work of United Nations staff.

50. The concerns of the Secretary-General and the Advisory Committee regarding the need to increase the representation of women and ensure wide geographical representation should not overshadow the key priority set out in the Charter of selecting the most qualified candidates. At the same time, his delegation welcomed the new disaggregated data on the geographical distribution of staff, produced using the methodology that had been proposed by his delegation. The updated information, in particular on staff working in non-geographical posts, provided a more accurate picture of the Secretariat staff funded by the regular budget.

51. His delegation shared the concerns of the Advisory Committee regarding the 431 staff members whose geographical status was not defined; in his next report on human resources management, the Secretary-General should inform the General Assembly of the measures taken to address that situation.

52. He welcomed the launch of the online tool that provided delegations access to information on geographical distribution and urged the Secretariat to update the information regularly. His delegation would provide feedback to improve the tool.

53. Maintaining ethical standards was another important issue. He would examine closely the proposals to amend the staff regulations on conflict of interest. It was necessary to consider the legal implications of administrative decisions to ensure not only that the Organization's reputation was protected from the unlawful actions of its staff but also that staff members were protected from abuse of administrative power. The problem of conflicts of interest that arose when staff members moved from the United Nations to the private sector should also be an area of focus.

54. **Mr. Nguyen** Dinh Hai (Viet Nam) said that the report of the Secretary-General on the composition of the Secretariat (A/66/347) made it clear that gender parity had been achieved only among staff at the P-1 and P-2 levels, with women consistently accounting for less than 30 per cent of staff in senior management posts. In that regard, he expressed confidence that the Secretary-General would be successful not only in fulfilling his commitment to achieving gender parity, but also balanced representation of developed and developing countries in the composition of the staff, in line with the principle of equitable geographical distribution.

55. Staff mobility must be applicable to staff both at Headquarters and in field offices in order to expand opportunities for all. His delegation supported the recommendations contained in the Joint Inspection Unit report on inter-agency staff mobility and work/life balance in the organizations of the United Nations system (A/66/355). Specifically, his delegation shared the view that inter-agency mobility could be promoted by focusing on the commonalities and values shared by

all organizations within the system, while at the same time recognizing that no single mobility scheme could be universally applied, given the differences in the mandate, size and operational needs of the various organizations.

The meeting rose at 11.40 a.m.